

Supplemental Note on a Recent Javanese Gamelan Record

by

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The first longplaying record of Javanese gamelan music to be issued outside Indonesia has recently been made available on the international market under the title, Gamelan Music from Java, PHILIPS 631 209 PL (stereo 831 209 PY).

The recordings were made, with the kind permission of H.R.H. the Susuhunan, at the royal kraton of Surakarta. The court musicians (nijaga Dalem) usually rehearse twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday evenings, in the audience-hall of the palace, the pendapa Sasanasewaka. The music on the Philips disc consists of compositions played during these rehearsal-periods at the request of Mr. Nusjirwan Tirtaamidjaja, who also made the recordings, late in December 1963. Copies of Mr. Tirtaamidjaja's recordings were deposited in the Ethnomusicological Archive section of the Institute of Musicology, University of Amsterdam. In homage to its founder and former director, the late Dr. Jaap Kunst, the Archive chose two pieces from Mr. Tirtaamidjaja's collection and edited them as a gramophone record. The following note is not designed to demonstrate the disc's various merits or demerits. It is merely intended to supply some additional relevant information which, for lack of space, could not be included in the notes on the record's sleeve.

TUKUNG

Of the two pieces selected, the gending bonangan "Tukung" (18 minutes), in pelog patet barang, (or rather its nuclear theme) has been rendered in staff notation on the sleeve of the disc, mainly to facilitate analytical listening to the two paraphrasing (panerusan) instruments, the bonang barung (low bonang) and the bonang panerus (high bonang), which lend their name to this type of composition (gending bonang). It so happened, however, that the recording was actually started a few seconds late, with the result that the microphone missed the first opening notes of the introduction (bubuka). Moreover, in the transcription on the sleeve, a disturbing error escaped the author's attention: the note lima (= b) should read nem (= c) in line 6 bar 4, throughout line 7 except in bar 4, and in line 10 bar 4. Thanks to a written communication from the outstanding Jogjanese musician, R. M. Tjokrowasito, the complete nuclear theme of "Tukung" can now be reproduced here as he wrote it down. (The usual cipher notation is used whereby bem = 1, gulu = 2, dada = 3, pelog = 4, lima = 5, nem = 6, barang = 7.) Where the Surakarta kraton version of "Tukung", as played on the disc, deviates from that provided by Mr. Tjokrowasito, the differences are marked by notes in square brackets.

Gending Bonangan "Tukung"

(after R. M. Tjokrowasito.)

Drum pattern: semang.Mode: pélog paṭet barang.4 ketuk beats in Section A (Mérong) become8 ketuk beats in Section B (Minggah).Buka (Introduction):

2 2 7 2 . 7 6 5 2 2 7 2 . 7 6 5 . 5 . 5* . 5 . 5 6 7 2 7
 N+G
 5 5 . 5
 [6 5 3 5]

A** (Mérong)

	K***		K
6 7 2 7	6 5 3 5	6 7 2 7	6 5 3 5
K		K	N
3 3 . 1	2 3 5 3	7 6 7 .	5 6 7 6
		[. 7 . .]	
K		K	
7 6 5 3	2 3 5 3	6 7 6 5	3 2 3 2
[.]			[7]
K		K	N
. 2 3 5	6 5 3 2	7 6 7 .	5 6 7 6
[. 7 .	5 6 7 2	. 7 . .]	
K		K	
7 6 5 3	2 3 5 3	6 7 6 5	3 2 3 2
[.]			[7]
K		K	N
. 2 3 5	6 5 3 2	7 6 7 .	5 6 7 6
[. 7 .	5 6 7 2	. 7 . .]	
K		K	
4 4 . 2	4 5 2 1	. 111 2	3 5 6 5
[5]	[421	4 1 .]	[4]
K		K	N+G
. 5 5 .	5 5 3 5	6 7 2 7	6 5 3 5
[. 5]	[. .]		

* This is where the recording starts.

** On the disc section A runs for 2 gongan, section B for 4 gongan.

*** In spite of the ketuk markings here, this instrument is not actually used in the recorded performance.

Repeat section A three or four times unchanged. When subsequently entering section B below, the fourth (last previous) kenong-phrase should be played as follows:

	K			K	
. 7 6 .	6 7 2 3	2 7 6 .	6 7 2 3		
	K	K		N+G	
4 3 4 .	4 3 4 .	4 3 4 6	4 3 4 2		

After this there follows section B, the dawah or minggah portion:

B. (Minggah)

K	K	K	K
4 3 4 6	4 3 4 2	4 3 4 6	4 3 4 2
K	K	K	K N
4 3 4 6	4 3 2 3	6 5 3 2	. 7 5 6
		[. 3 3 3	2]
K	K	K	K
7 5 6 7	6 5 2 3	6 5 3 5	3 2 3 2
[3]	[6]		[6 5]
K	K	K	K N
6 532 6	532 6 53	2 5 2 3	5 6 7 6
[5 3 2 5	3 2 5 3	. 3 3 3	2 7 5]
K	K	K	K
7 5 6 7	6 5 2 3	6 5 3 5	3 2 3 2
[3]	[6]		[6 5]
K	K	K	K N
6 532 6	532 6 53	2 5 2 3	5 6 7 6
[5 3 2 5	3 2 5 3	. 3 3 3	2 7 5]
K	K	K	K
7 6 7 6 .	6 7 2 3	2 7 6 .	6 7 2 3
[.]			
K	K	K	K N+G
4 3 4 .	4 3 4 .	4 3 4 6	4 3 4 2

[Note: In the above, K = Ketuk; N = Kenong; G = Gong.]

One of the most interesting features of the recorded performance of "Tukung" is the part played by the highest saron or peking, especially the curious 'deviations' from the nuclear theme (as played on the slentem) in the final kenong-phrase of section A. The author has made an attempt to render these 'deviations' below. In the rendition the upper line reveals the peking, as it were obscuring the nuclear theme, which is given in square brackets on the lower line.

P.					5	5556	6667	^N 7776
Sl.					[5]	[5]	[7]	[6]
P.	6666	6565	5555	^K 5552	2223	3556	6665	5332
Sl.	[5]	[4]	[.]	[2]	[4]	[5]	[4	2 1]
P.	2226	6531	2232	^K 2232	2223	3556	6666	7556
Sl.	[4]	[1]	[.]	[2]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[5]
P.	6556	6666	6666	^K 6666	6565	6555	5556	6565
Sl.	[.]	[.]	[5]	[.]	[5]	[5]	[.]	[.]
P.	5556	6667	7772	^K 2227	7776	6665	5553	^{N+G} 3335
Sl.	[6]	[7]	[2]	[7]	[6]	[5]	[3]	[5]

It is scarcely possible to believe that the player, a highly experienced, elderly musician, is playing this way inadvertently (though one gets this impression at first from the fact that he frequently stresses the note next to the 'nuclear' note.) It is most probable that he is expressing the kraton's musical adat, by inserting intentional 'errors' to avoid a dull faultlessness, and to give the performance its specifically kraton feel.

According to R. M. Tjokrowasito, Javanese gamelan compositions (gending) can be classified according to their leading instruments. Thus there are gending rebab, where the rebab takes the main part, such as "Gambir Sawit", "Onang-Onang," etc.; gending gambang, dominated by the gambang, such as "nDurkadjongan," and the ketawang "Segaran"; and gending bonang, where the bonang is predominant, like "Tukung" and "Bremara." Gending bonang, he adds, are usually played before the klenengan proper, or as nguju-uju (welcome) at the opening of ceremonies such as circumcision and marriage. In a further note he remarks, "I have sent you a notation of "Tukung" in Mataram style (Jogja). The theme is the same in Jogja and Solo, but the contents are different."

From the eminent Solonese musician and teacher, R. Kodrat Purbopangrawit, now residing in Djakarta, I received the following information on the place of "Tukung" in the setting of Surakarta. "Tukung," he writes, belongs to the oldest gending, though the exact age is unknown. Other gending bonang in the same category include: "Siring," "Gondrong," "Wedi Kengsèr," "Pari Gentang" and "Bondèt Bonang" - all in pélog patet barang. They are usually performed in the morning or in the afternoon before 6 p.m., in expectation of the start of some festivity. Gending bonang in the mode pélog patet lima include: "Bremara," "Djalaga," "Pangrawit," "Babar Lajar," "Klentung," "Denggung Turu Laré" and "Slébrak"; they are all used in the same way as the previously mentioned [pélog patet barang] gending. This applies both to the kraton of Surakarta and the court of the Mangkunegaran.

KOMBANG MĀRĀ

The other composition on the Philips disc, the gending rebab "Kombang Mārā" (27 1/2 minutes), pélog patet lima, is in striking contrast to "Tukung." The Pamurbā Lagu (melody-creating instrument) is the rebab, whose melodic line is based on the nuclear theme. In addition there is a vocal part, sung by one of the kraton's lèdèk pasindèn, since the high-status lurah pasindèn do not deign to perform in 'light' pieces of this kind. Both rebab and singer perform in the typical Surakarta kraton style, which is more undulating, smooth and languorous than the more flowery, dramatic Jogjakarta manner.

"Kombang Mārā" is among the most beautiful of the classical gending and dates back to the beginning of the Surakarta era, possibly even into the Kartasura period (early 18th Century). It was traditionally performed in two kinds of context. First, it was often used as the major gending accompanying the opening (court) scene or djedjer of the wajang gedog. In this case, according to R. Kodrat Purbopangrawit, a limited orchestration was the rule, the demung, bonang and gong ageng being omitted. Secondly, it was played in the evening as a straight concert piece, an overture to the night's performance. In this case the full pélog orchestra was employed.

The 'score' reproduced below is copied from a manuscript collection of Solonese gending presented to Dr. Jaap Kunst and now in the Library of the Ethnomusicological Archive at the University of Amsterdam. Though the manuscript itself dates only from the 1920s, according to Dr. Mantle Hood, it is a copy of a larger, late nineteenth century kraton manuscript.⁽¹⁾ It is a remarkable fact that manuscript and recording correspond note for note, notwithstanding the stretch of about 100 years which lies between them. This in itself is an indication of the strength of the Surakarta kraton tradition and its imperviousness to cultural change.

LAGOE KOMBANG MARA (2)

pélog patet lima

Katrangan. Dimoelaikanja dangan wirama kentjeng
hingga sampai gong-kenong 1 lantas wiromo per-
lahanlahan (Tamban) bat-toeroet. Pandjangnja

(1) See Mantle Hood, The Nuclear Theme as a Determinant of Patet in Javanese Music, J. B. Wolters, Groningen, Djakarta, 1954., pp. 147, 233.

(2) Buku Lagu Solo, Coll. J. Kunst, Ethnomusicological Archive, circa 1925, Gending no. 6.

boenji Lagoe kombang mara ini patoetnja hanjalah 20 minuut; djikalau akan naik sevara, wiramanja-kentjang dan di moelaikannja-moelai boenjinja kenong 3 pada akan djatoehnja gong tengah; gong penoenggoel lagoe lantas mendjadi naik, wirama lantas perlahan-lahan (tamban) bartoeroet. dan di moelaikannja pada djatoehnja moelaikannja gong penoenggoel tadi; djika lau akan soewoek, wirama di kentjangken dan di moelaikan nja koe-rang 2 gong dari soewoek nja, sadeng koerang satoe gong dari soewoeknja wirama di perlahanken (tamban) hingga pada djatoehnja gong lantas habis (soewoek).

[Explanation. Start in quick tempo up till the first kenong, then gradually slow down (tamban). Properly played, the composition Kombang Mara should not last for more than 20 minutes. The transition to the Minggah section begins with an acceleration of tempo immediately after the third kenong leading up to the middle gong, the gong panoenggoel (which divides the composition in two). At this point the Minggah section starts and the rhythm begins gradually to slow down. At the third gong before the end of the piece the rhythm accelerates again, while at the second gong before the end a gradual deceleration sets in, which continues up to the stroke of the final gong (suwuk).](3)

Bubuka rebab:

3 . 2 1 6 5 . . 5 3 . 2 1 6 5 . 5 . 5 . 5 . 5 . 5 . 6 .
 G*
 1 6 5

A. [Mérong]

	K		K	N	
[1.]	. . . 5	2 1 6 5	2 1 5 6	2 1 6 5	(1) ta [= slow tempo]
	K		K	N	
[2.]	1 5 . 6	1 . 2 1	3 2 1 2	. 1 6 5	(2)
	K		K	N	
[3.]	1 5 . 6	1 . 2 1	3 2 1 2	. 1 6 5	(3)
	K		K	G	
[4.]	. . 5 6	1 6 5 4	2 4 5 6	2 1 6 5	

(3) Mr. Frans Harjadi takes credit for the translation of this text, which is written in an odd mixture of Javanese and old-fashioned Malay-Indonesian.

[5.]	. . . 5	2 1 6 5	2 1 5 6	2 1 6 5	(1)
	K		K	N	
[6.]	1 5 . 6	1 . 2 1	3 2 1 2	. 1 6 5	(2)
	K		K	N	
[7.]	1 5 . 6	1 . 2 1	3 2 1 2	. 1 6 5	(3)
	K		K	G	
[8.]	3 3 . .	3 3 5 3	6 5 3 2	3 1 2 3	
	K		K	N	
[9.]	. . . .	3 3 5 6	7 6 5 3	2 1 2 3	(1)
	K		K	N	
[10.]	1 2 3 5	. . . .	5 6 5 4	. 5 2 1	(2)
	K		K	N	
[11.]	. 5 6 1	. . . .	1 1 . .	1 1 5 6	(3)
	K		K	G**	
[12.]	1 1 . 2	3 2 1 6	5 6 1 2	3 2 1 2	
	K		K	N	
[13.]	. . . .	2 2 4 5	. 4 2 1	6 5 3 5	(1) Bab M [= repeat sec-
	K		K	G***	tion A from
[14.]	6 6 . .	6 6 5 6	. 1 . 6	5 3 2 3	2nd <u>Kenong</u> on]
	K		K	N	
[15.]	. . . 3	. 1 2 3	. 1 2 3	. 1 2 3	(1)
	K		K	N	
[16.]	. 6 . 5	. 4 2 1	. . 1 2	4 5 6 5	(2)
	K		K	N	
[17.]	. 5 4 2	1 2 4 5	6 5 4 2	1 6 5 4	(3)
	K		K	G	
[18.]	. 4 4 .	4 4 5 6	1 6 5 4	2 1 2 1	TcM [= begin section B in slow tempo]

B. [Minggah]

[19.]	2 2 . .	2 2 1 6	5 6 1 6	5 3 2 3	(1)
	K	K	K	K	N
[20.]	. 3 3 .	6 5 3 2	6 6 5 6	5 3 2 3	(2)
	K	K	K	K	N
[21.]	. 4 4 .	4 4 5 6	1 6 5 6	5 4 2 4	(3)
	K	K	K	K	G
[22.]	. 4 4 .	4 4 5 6	1 6 5 4	2 1 2 1	
	K	K	K	K	N
[23.]	6 6 . .	6 6 1 2	3 2 1 6	5 6 1 6	(1)
	K	K	K	K	N
[24.]	3 3 . .	6 5 3 2	3 2 1 6	5 6 1 6	(2)
	K	K	K	K	N
[25.]	3 3 . .	6 5 3 2	3 2 1 6	5 6 1 6	(3)
	K	K	K	K	G
[26.]	. 1 . .	1 1 . 2	3 3 5 3	2 1 2 1	

	K		K		K		K	N	
[27.]	. 3 1 2	3 5 . 4	2 . 3 2	1 6 5 6	(1)				
	K	K	K	K	N				
[28.]	3 3 . .	6 5 2 1	. . 1 2	4 5 6 5	(2)				
	K	K	K	K	N				
[29.]	. 5 4 2	1 2 4 5	6 5 4 2	1 6 5 4	(3)				
	K	K	K	K	G				
[30.]	. 4 4 .	4 4 5 6	1 6 5 4	2 1 2 1	Bc\$ [= repeat from beginning of section B.]				

[Note: In the above, K = Ketuk; N = Kenong; G = Gong.

- * This gong signals the end of the bubukā and the beginning of section A.
- ** This gong marks the end of section A and the entry into the transitional section.
- *** This gong marks the end of the transitional section and the entry into section B proper.]

In the unabridged classical version, as contained in the manuscript, after the bubukā, section A starts rather rapidly but by line 2 has slowed down to the 'regular' rhythm for this section. Section A is repeated at least once, substituting line 13 for line 1 the second time round. At the end of the repetition of section A, line 14 is substituted for line 12. The gong stroke at the end of this line marks the beginning of the transitional section (lines 15-18), which opens with a considerable acceleration. At line 18 a deceleration begins, down to the concluding gong at the end of the line. With line 19 section B begins, and the composition ends with the final gong on line 30.

In the rather shortened version presented on the Philips disc, the transition from section A begins at the end of line 3 of the repetition; this line 3 is directly followed by line 14, which in turn leads into the transitional section. From then on the piece follows the course of the complete classical version.

In the recorded version there are a number of other points worthy of note:

- (a) the ketuk, marked in on the manuscript, is entirely absent.
- (b) the lèdèk pasindèn's words are not sung by heart but from a written collection of texts.
- (c) the performance concludes with a patetan for rebab and gendèr (not found in the manuscript) in which the two players are largely free to choose their own melodies and rhythms, provided they do not leave the patet or mode.
- (d) the nijāgā Dalem recorded on the disc were led by their regular leader, the aged and revered R. M. Warsodiningrat. During the kraton rehearsal-periods, he generally plays the drum (kendang or ketipung), not the rebab; this is in fact the case with "Kombang Mārā."